

EXHIBIT 18

□ 50: Blood. 2004 Nov 1;104(9):2936-9. Epub 2004 Jul 8.

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BCL2 protein expression parallels its mRNA level in normal and malignant B cells.

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The regulation of B-cell lymphoma 2 (BCL2) protein expression in germinal center (GC) B cells has been controversial. Previous reports have indicated posttranscriptional regulation plays a dominant role. However, a number of recent studies contradicted these reports. Using real-time polymerase chain reaction (PCR) and Standardized Reverse Transcriptase-PCR (StaRT-PCR), we measured the level of mRNA expression in GC, mantle zone (MNZ), and marginal zone (MGZ) cells from laser capture microdissection. Both quantitative RT-PCR measurements of microdissected GC cells from tonsils showed that GC cells had low expression of BCL2 transcripts commensurate with the low protein expression level. These results are in agreement with microarray studies on fluorescence-activated cell sorter (FACS)-sorted cells and microdissected GC cells. We also examined BCL2 mRNA and protein expression on a series of 30 cases of diffuse large B-cell lymphoma (DLBCL) and found, in general, a good correlation. The results suggested that BCL2 protein expression is regulated at the transcriptional level in normal B cells and in the neoplastic cells in most B-cell lymphoproliferative disorders.

PMID: 15242877 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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